

The Benjamin A. Fahnestock House  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. PA 4

*Reduced Copies & Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Charles M. Stotz, District Officer  
818 Bessemer Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa.

## THE BENJAMIN A. FAHNESTOCK HOUSE

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Owner Congress of Women's Clubs, (occupant).Date of Erection Between 1835 and 1840.Architect Not known.Builder Not known.Present Condition Good. Façade practically in original condition - interior so much altered as not to be worth recording.Number of Stories Three.Materials of Construction: Façade of brick, painted at present. Stone foundation and belt course, window sills and lintels. Entrance doorway of wood.Other Existing Records: None.Additional Data: The Fahnestock House is located at No. 408 Penn Avenue, in the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The following facts concerning it have been taken from the Deed Books in the office of the Recorder of Deeds for Allegheny County.

The land on which it stands is part of the original William Penn tract, the first transfer of record being from John Penn, Jr. and John Penn, of Philadelphia, Esquires, late Proprietaries of Pennsylvania, conveyed by their deed of March 7th, 1785, to Robert Galbraith, Esquire, recorded in Deed Book C, page 226. The parcel consists of four lots, numbered 123, 124, 125 and 126 in Colonel Wood's General Plan of Pittsburgh, comprising the square bounded by Penn Street, Hay Street, Liberty Street and an alley.

On Jan. 18th, 1794, Robert Galbraith and Perthenia, his wife, somewhat inadvertently conveyed lots 125 and 126 to one David Evans, Carpenter,

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for the consideration of 76 pounds, 5 shillings; it seems, according to subsequent proceedings, that they had actually intended to sell lots 123 and 124.

The first mention of any house on the property occurs during the ownership of Benjamin A. Fahnestock, Druggist, who acquired title to that portion of lot No. 125 from Anthony Dreveau (later Dravo) in 1835, and sold it to James May in 1840, thus fixing the time of its erection between those dates. No other exact information is ascertainable on this point, or as to the name of either the Architect or the Builder.

From May 8th, 1855 to July 14th, 1864, the property was owned and occupied by the Rev. Theodore B. Lyman, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, (now Trinity Cathedral), in Pittsburgh.

The house was purchased in 1922 by the Congress of Women's Clubs, together with the adjoining house to the east, and both buildings so altered in the interior for their use that the original plan has not been recorded. No change, however, has ever been made to the original façade of the house at No. 408, so far as can be ascertained, with the possible exception that the steps to the entrance, which are now within the building line, probably were originally in the form of a stoop projecting out on the sidewalk.

The three-story façade is typical of the simple town house of the period from 1830 to 1840. The extreme severity of the front is relieved only by the sunk panels at the ends of the stone window lintels, and by the refinement of the entrance doorway, with its free-standing columns with Ionic capitals, and semicircular fan-light above. The bond of the brick work is Flemish, and the entire façade has been much painted in recent years.

The mantel shown on the drawings is one of two occurring in the house, both exactly similar in all respects. It is of black-and-gold marble, of the greatest refinement in proportion, mouldings and detail, and one of the finest examples extant of the characteristic mantel treatment of the period.

*Louis Stevens*

Louis Stevens - Author.

Approved

*Charles M. Stotz*

Charles M. Stotz  
District Officer PA 4

*Reviewed by  
Henry C. Foxman  
1936*

Date *Feb 15 1935*